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INSIDE THIS "INSIDE" Page

1983 Yearbook of Agriculture, "Using Our Natural Resources," released.....	1
Two northeastern ag communicators groups plan joint meeting in Vermont.....	2
Total USDA printing costs reduced in 1983, although orders up slightly.....	2
Cornell University has three agricultural communications positions open.....	2
Three-day "Business Information from Washington" seminar scheduled.....	3
Electronic mail network to link White House with departments and agencies....	3
"Energy Ingenuity" is title of Kansas State University "newspaper".....	3
New Harris poll shows computer revolution advancing faster than thought.....	4
Popular magazine automates using stand-along microcomputers.....	4

U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
MAIL ROOM
JAN 29 '84

"CHALLENGE OF 80'S" YEARBOOK ISSUED

At ceremonies in the patio of the USDA Administration Building, Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block last Thursday released the 84th Yearbook of Agriculture, "Using Our Natural Resources."

Using the natural resources of this nation wisely is a major challenge of the 1980's, Secretary Block said in the foreword of the yearbook. He said the book gives an idea of what's involved in that challenge, and how the nation can meet it.

The 612-page hardback has 60 chapters, 32 pages of color photos and many other illustrations.

Yearbook editor Jack Hayes says copies of the 1983 yearbook are available for \$7 each from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402. Copies also will be for sale at government bookstores in many cities.

In addition, each member of Congress will have limited copies of the yearbook for public distribution. USDA has no copies for sale or distribution.

More than 1.6 million copies of the 1948 through 1982 yearbooks had been sold by the Superintendent of Documents as of October this year.

Of the yearbooks still in print, leaders in sales by SupDocs were: 1965 "Consumers All"--125,203; 1959 "Food"--98,841; 1967 "Outdoors USA"--93,897; 1972 "Landscape for Living"--75,863; 1956 "Animal Diseases"--74,703; 1948 "Grass"--66,949; 1955 "Water"--66,576; 1953 "Plant Diseases"--57,111; 1977 "Gardening for Food & Fun"--54,114; 1979 "What's to Eat?"--52,364; and 1978 "Living on a Few Acres"--51,519.

"Using Our Natural Resources" is the 84th volume to carry the title, Yearbook of Agriculture. This designation formally began with the 1894 volume and a yearbook has been issued annually since, with a few exceptions due principally to suspension of publication during World War II.

Yearbooks from 1948 on remain in print with three exceptions: 1949 "Trees," 1952 "Insects" and 1957 "Soil."

NORTHEAST AG COMMUNICATORS PLAN MEETING

Two groups of agricultural communicators in the Northeast plan to get together January 12-13 at Burlington, Vermont.

Mal Boright, information and education chief of the Vermont Department of Agriculture, says the Northeastern Agricultural Communicators (a newly formed group of farm editors, broadcasters and other communicators) and the Northeast Communication Officers of State Departments of Agriculture will meet at the Sheraton Hotel.

Tentative program includes Rep. James M. Jeffords of Vermont and a member of the Committee on Agriculture in the U.S. House of Representatives. Two state agricultural commissioners also have agreed to meet with the group.

For more information, contact Boright at the Vermont Department of Agriculture, 116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, or call at (802) 828-2419.

USDA PRINTING COSTS REDUCED IN 1983

A report prepared by the Publishing Division's Printing Branch in USDA's Office of Information shows the total amount spent for printing in USDA during fiscal 1983--at less than \$19 million--was down by \$6.5 million or about 25.5% less than fiscal 1982.

The cost figures include all USDA operations, both headquarters and field. Procurement through GPO and its regional offices totaled nearly \$16.5 million during the year, down from \$22.2 million in 1982.

Printing by USDA's Office of Operations printing plant in Washington--at \$1.9 million--was essentially the same as for the previous year.

All other printing costs, including Soil Conservation Service cartographic printing in Fort Worth, Tex., and field procurement directly from commercial sources, totaled about a half million dollars, less than half that of 1982.

Although the dollar amount decreased, orders placed for printing in fiscal 1983--at 14,221--were up slightly from the 14,145 orders placed in 1982.

CORNELL HAS THREE POSITIONS OPEN

The Department of Communication Arts in Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has three communications openings--one in public information or public relations, one in graphic design and visual communication theory and research, and one in telecommunications.

According to Donald Schwartz, chairman of the department, the latter position will have responsibility to develop and coordinate the in-service communication education program for 450 state and county Cooperative Extension Service staff members.

All three positions require a doctorate in communication, mass communication or a closely allied field, as well as strong research credentials.

Positions will be available starting July 1, 1984. Closing date for applications is February 1, 1984.

Send letter of application with information on teaching, research and administrative interests, complete resume, transcripts and names and addresses of 5 references to Dr. Donald Schwartz, Chairman, Department of Communication Arts, 307 Roberts Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853. His telephone number is (607) 256-2111.

1984 WASHINGTON INFORMATION SEMINAR SET

A 3-day "Business Information from Washington" seminar will be conducted in Washington, D.C., Feb. 8-10 by Washington Researchers, Ltd.

The design of the "fast-paced overview of the federal government's information machine" is to help participants discover information about domestic and international markets, companies and issues.

The seminar will reveal details about the data collection activities of federal departments and agencies and provide a quick review of "scores of other information sources," according to the sponsoring organization.

Among the scheduled topics and speakers is Ben Blankenship, information director of USDA's Economics Management Staff, who will discuss "tapping USDA publications and people for agricultural information."

The seminar will be held in the Washington Hilton Hotel. Registration fee for the full program is \$745; or \$545 for the "domestic information segment" only Feb. 8-9; or \$295 for the one-day "international information segment."

For additional information contact: Washington Researchers, Ltd, 918 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, or call (202) 833-2230.

NET TO LINK WHITE HOUSE WITH DEPARTMENTS

By January, the White House expects to be linked to about 22 federal departments and independent agencies via an electronic mail network that officials of the Office of Management & Budget and others hope will improve efficiency and reduce paperwork.

In partial operation since October, the electronic network is the result of a White House contract with ITT Dialcom Incorporated's time-sharing system.

The White House already is linked with the Secretary's Office and the press secretary's office in USDA.

Immediate plans are to also link the various assistant secretaries for administration, the offices of congressional relations and the office of inspector generals with the White House and OMB.

Other USDA offices may be linked with the new network later, especially those offices which are already using the Dialcom system internally in USDA.

KANSAS ENERGY NEWSPAPER AVAILABLE

The Kansas Energy Extension Service of Kansas State University has prepared the winter issue of "Energy Ingenuity," a 16-page newspaper geared toward energy conservation.

Susan Bacon, KSU extension energy editor, will share a copy while supplies last. Call her at (913) 532-5804, or write to her at the Cooperative Extension Service, Umberger Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506.

WP, E-MAIL SEEN ONLY THE BEGINNING

Word processing and electronic mail are the baby steps toward total office integration, according to a senior consultant with Hanagan & Associates, Inc.

One major step to office integration, said Susan S. Kay, will be connecting electronic mail to the data base and tying the data base to the word processing system to complete the circle.

COMPUTERIZATION ADVANCING MORE RAPIDLY

A new poll by Louis Harris shows that the computer revolution is advancing even more rapidly than anyone imagined.

The poll shows that 45 percent of the general public says they know how to use a computer, 10 percent own their own machine and 50 percent expect to own one within five years.

Harris, who presented the study recently at a Smithsonian Institution symposium in Washington, said "overwhelming majorities see real and serious and abiding benefits from the dramatic growth of computers in their lives.

He said 83 percent of Americans think science and technology have done "more good than harm" and that most Americans look forward to getting news and banking and shopping via two-way TV sets in the information age.

But Harris said the poll also found a dark side to the new technology.

More than two-thirds surveyed believe the "Big Brother is Watching You" society depicted in George Orwell's classic book "1984" is almost here because of the computer age.

More than half of those surveyed, including those most familiar with new technologies, think computers are a threat to personal privacy.

MAGAZINE AUTOMATES WITH MICROCOMPUTERS

Agricultural communications offices could possibly get some tips from a popular magazine which recently "went electronic" in its editorial offices.

POPULAR SCIENCE is not the first national magazine to move from a manual to an automated editorial and production system, according to an article in the Dec. 5 issue of COMPUTERWORLD magazine.

However, rather than going the traditional terminal-to-mainframe route as other magazines and newspapers have done, POPULAR SCIENCE chose to use stand-alone microcomputers, primarily because the initial investment was low and would allow the publication to take advantage of new technology the magazine's staff reports on every month.

The magazine did not want to tie itself to a large investment in a technology it believes will change greatly over the next few years, editorial director Hubert Luckett said.

Among the criteria established for equipment selection were upgradability and flexibility, he said. Also, they did not want a system tied to a central processing unit, that could crash the entire system.

"This way, if one personal computer goes out, it's of small consequence. You can always borrow another one--you're not stuck," Luckett added.

The personal computers selected were chosen because they could be used for word processing, text editing and computer typesetting, as well as for budgeting and planning work.

With the system, staff writers write and memorize on floppy disk, send a hard copy (printed on a daisywheel printer) to the copyroom.

After the copy editors receive the marked-up hard copy from the editors, they call up the story from the disk on their personal computers and make the edited changes. Twice a day, a copy of the edited disk is sent to the printers.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to the Deputy Director for Current Information, Room 458-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or to AGRO02 mailbox on the Dialcom electronic mail system, or call (202) 447-7454.